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# The OUSFG Newsletter

## 1st Week

### Michaelmas term 1996

#### Committee Changes

Since the election of a new committee at the AGM in Hilary Term, there have been a number of unforeseen changes. Yes, for a while it looked as if we would have a smooth seamless transition from one executive to another and would usher in a new era in which each committee post was held by a different person. But we have been thwarted in this aim by the cruel twist of fate which arranged for two of our committee members to cease being students of the university within weeks of this new dynasty taking up the reins of command. Both intend to return to the joys of student life after a year out and, while Victoria will be a finalist and therefore unavailable next year, I suggest we re-elect Alex as soon as he returns as just retribution for this desertion. The Committee as it now stands is as follows:

#### President

[Rhiannon 'Allegedly' Barber](#)

Corpus Christi College

**email:** Auden <[sarah-rhiannon.barber@corpus-christi.oxford.ac.uk](mailto:sarah-rhiannon.barber@corpus-christi.oxford.ac.uk)>

#### Secretary and Video Rep

Matt 'Punt Hero' Marcus

Magdalen College

**email:** Locksmith <[ma96001@sable.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ma96001@sable.ox.ac.uk)>

#### Treasurer

[Ian 'Has anyone seen him lately?' Snell](#)

Oriel College

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#### Newsletter Editor

Rhiannon 'The Return' Barber

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#### SFinx Editor

Victoria 'Quong' Seaman

**email:** victoria.seaman at magdalen.oxford.ac.uk

#### Invisible OUSFG

Duncan 'Piniata' Martin

Christ Church College

#### Genital Piercing Officer

Hanbury 'Sir Not Appearing in this Film'

Balliol College

**Beard of OUSFG**

Tanaqui 'What happened to spontaneity?' Weaver

**email:** Tanaqui <[cen@ecs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:cen@ecs.ox.ac.uk)>

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## **INTRODUCTORY FRESHERS PARTY**

### **Sunday 1st Week (October 13th)**

Meet the committee in all its glory.  
See the new Secretary officially baptised.

- Find out what it's like to be a shadow of a fish and why lemon curry is an article of the constitution.
- Try to spot the invisible ousfg and guess his secret mission.
- Wonder why all the female committee members are wearing red.

*And.....*

- Join the society! You too could be a member of this elite group don't miss this unique opportunity.
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## **Society Meetings**

### **Discussion Meetings**

#### **When and Where?**

For this term these will be taking place at Corpus Christi in the Fraenkel Room on every other Wednesday at 8pm.

#### **What?**

Discussion meetings are hosted by any OUSFG member who has a subject that deserves discussion. They essentially consist of a talk, given by the member in question which can be anything from Sex and the Science Fiction Computer (by Victoria) to Hermeticism (by Gideon). There are always a lot of interruptions, especially if Alec and Ian are present, and the nature of the discussion can become extremely tangential. But, however random they become, they always conclude with everyone going to a pub - usually The Turf.

#### **Who?**

Any OUSFG member can give a discussion meeting. Freshers in particular are welcome to do so, since we're rather in need of new blood. (And no, that isn't anything to do with Vampires.)

### **Which?**

Discussion meetings arranged for the first half of this term are as follows:

#### **1st Week** (16th October):

Mystery Night Strikes Again

#### **2nd Week** (30th October):

Writers' Circle - Inaugural Meeting By Rhiannon and Matt

### **Writers' Circle?**

It's been suggested that Oxford is in need of an active Writers' Circle, therefore this discussion meeting is dedicated to an attempt to establish one. OUSFG is a speculative fiction society and we may as well write it as read it given the current consistency of the Library. Writers please turn up with short stories, sections of novels, poetry etc (all forms of fiction welcomed) and we'll endeavour to intelligently and usefully criticise. All exhausted participants should attempt revivification afterwards at the Turf.

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## **Video Meetings**

### **When?**

These take place on the Wednesdays we don't have discussion meetings.

### **Where?**

They're at Magdalen again, since we still possess an active Magdalen member among our number in the person of Mr Marcus.

### **Whither?**

Meet in Magdalen Lodge at 8pm to be conducted to the Video Room.

### **What?**

Video meetings are exactly what they sound like, opportunities/excuses for members of the society to watch films of a loosely based sf or fantasy nature. Sometimes the sf connection can be impossible to discover as in the case of Mr Sidwell's Top Cat Marathon Night, of which the least said the better. Anything from Doctor Who to Tank Girl is a possibility so nominate a video today and save the committee having to choose one themselves.

## Which?

Video meetings arranged for the first half of this term are:

**2nd Week** (23rd October): Hack & Slash Night

Highlander

The Rocky Horror Picture Show

**4th Week** (6th November): Sword & Sorcery Night

Conan the Barbarian

Willow or Labyrinth

## Why?

These have been decided upon completely at random by this beleaguered Newsletter Editor, for the simple reason that no-one suggested anything last term despite multiple opportunities for doing so. And if I don't get any suggestions before the next newsletter comes out I'm going to schedule 'Rhi's Gratuitously Gothed Night with Interview with the Vampire and The Crow, without worrying that you've all seen them before.

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## Library Meetings

### When and Where?

Currently happening on Sundays at 8pm at The Turf. (Pub just off Broad Street)

### Why?

The reason our library meetings are scheduled to start, and indeed finish, in a pub is that the library is still in storage owing to our lack of a librarian. Once we have librarian the library will be made available again. But library meetings traditionally end up in The Turf anyway (who us? predictable?) and, if everyone is feeling sufficiently intelligent, involve interestingly random conversation so turn up anyway and we'll try to have a library soon.

### What?

Well, somewhat obviously, OUSFG has a library of sf and fantasy books, and a few other things that we've collected over the years. You can borrow as many as you like, if a fully paid up member of the society, and return them whenever you're in the mood. You can also sit in the librarian's room and read the books there, until he or she decides to go to sleep and/or asks you to leave, or simply hunt through them for the occasional comments left by past OUSFG members on the blank pages at the end left delightfully free for such witterings. Given the quality of some of the library and the literary bent of

OUSFG (and I think I do mean bent) its an odds on chance that the witterings will be more worth reading than the selected book. At least until we sort out the library.

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## **Speaker Meetings**

### **What?**

These are meetings with an outside speaker. We haven't got any scheduled for the first half of term but I suggest people read His Dark Materials: Northern Lights by Phillip Pullman because I'm going to try to get him to speak to us later on this term. It was published in the US as The Golden Compass (a reference to the 'alethiometer' on the front of the book). It's aimed for the children's fantasy market here and the adult fantasy market there - which is a tad unusual. It's also just won the Carnegie Medal, which is an award not to be sneezed at, and since its an adult novel in the states might go on to win some of the fantasy awrds over there. Phillip Pullman lives in Oxford so, as long as there's a reasonable amount of enthusiasm (and some of us read his book), we should have a chance of getting him to come and talk to us.

### **Urgently Wanted! Subjects for Discussion meetings**

Due to the severe shortage of volunteers to give discussion meetings, I am putting out a general request for subject matter, however bizarre or random.

If no-one wants to give discussion meetings inthe second half of next term, suggestions would be welcomed for an alternative form of meeting to hold.

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## **LIBRARIAN WANTED!**

The OUSFG Library needs a home.

In return for a caring Librarian OUSFG offers free membership for a year, to anyone willing to look after the Library during that time.

This library, once sorted and scaled-down, (and this will happen, don't think it won't, 'cause you'll be wrong) will probably consist of 5-6 large cardboard boxes.

The Librarian needs to be someone with a decent sized room on college, who is available to host library meetings from 8-10pm on Sundays.

If someone will volunteer to be Librarian, I promise to try to get some new books from publishers over the Christmas Vac. Readable books I hasten to

stress. One's people will actually want to borrow.

Applicants please notify Rhiannon at Corpus or Matt at Magdalen.

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## Road to Nowhere album

Wanted: music to include on an OUSFG album which, once compiled, will be circulated among members.

RPGsoc has a Vampire Mix, why shouldn't we have an album too?

Road To Nowhere will obviously have to be included (Freshers - get a veteran OUSFG member to explain this to you) that leaves us with at least 18 more tracks to find.

Music suggestions to Rhiannon and we'll have a tape compilation evening later this term to create the tape from the final shortlist.

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## Thought For The Week

"You don't need to travel if you're omnipresent, you're already there."

- Mark Charlesly

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## SFINX

SFinx is the Science Fiction magazine associated to OUSFG. It contains original work, reviews and sf-related articles and is currently edited by Victoria Seaman. The latest issue should be out in the first half of Michaelmas Term and submissions for the next one are welcomed.

Please send any contributions, especially artwork to:

Victoria Seaman (Xanadu)  
c/o R. Barber  
Corpus Christi College.

This should ensure its safe arrival. Alternative articles can be given to Victoria or e-mailed to her at:

victoria.seaman @ magdalen.oxford.ac.uk

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## Editorial

First I'd like to stress that this is a newsletter with actual news in it, and not cunningly concealed news either, open and obvious news no less. There isn't a competition because I didn't have any entries for the last one, despite offering the entirety of the Petty Cash, as it stood at that point, as prize money. There is however a game, of sorts, to play. So look out for the 'Road to Nowhere' theme tape.

I'd be immensely grateful if someone would actually suggest some tapes for discussion meetings or videos to watch. Having said that, this plea will probably go unnoticed, so be warned, if I don't get any volunteers to actually give discussion meetings I'll start Volunteering people at random.

New members - (assuming that we have any) as you may have noticed, the current committee welcomes suggestions and contributions. If you have any, don't hesitate to state them with us.

The [OUSFG webpage](#) is being revitalised by [Tim](#) - so information should be more up-to-date. *[Actually, the more up-to-dateness is mainly due to Rhiannon sending me stuff to put here - WebEd.]* We might succeed in including newsletters *[This is obviously highly unlikely]* (which are well known for their quantities of useful information) depending on how willing our web-page editor is to spend time on this *[No hope]* and whether I will find any of it comprehensible. ([My own web-page](#) was constructed with much assistance.)

Please take note of the Lazer Quest item ([below](#)) since we need ten volunteers in order to field a team and make a respectable showing against RPGsoc. I know some people play Lazer Quest on a regular basis so, if we can avoid our usual apathy, we might actually beat them. (Especially since I'm calling in all joint members on our side - we need you more than they do.)

Volunteers (yes, that's a word that turns up often in this publication) are invited to contribute to the next OUSFG newsletter. Suggestions for articles have included a comix review (Alex was going to do one before his desertion) and a film review. Since we don't have either column at present I'd mention here that I've succeeded in seeing Independence Day and consider it to be quite watchable. If you like Star Wars you'll probably like this - the similarities are uncanny.

And finally... discussion of computers or e-mail is banned in the second meeting of every term, a clause of the constitution probably inserted by our techno-phobic ex-President, so consider yourselves warned.

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## Non-Humans Party

(Date to be announced)

Not as random as the Fresher's Party, nor as clannish as the Christmas Ball, this is intended for the benefit of the members who not only joined at the beginning of Michaelmas, but continue to come to meetings. It's intended to be a combined OUSFG and RPGsoc party so we're waiting for RPGsoc to find a mutually convenient date.

The theme (well there had to be one, didn't there) is Non-Humans. Everything from aliens to the undead is welcome, but no humans please or we'll lose our licence.

This isn't a society funded event and you won't have to pay for tickets. However, because it's not society funded, please bring a bottle otherwise there won't be any alcohol.

The venue, like the date, has yet to be decided. But it's a cunning way of testing your allegiance, because anyone who regularly turns up to meetings will hear the result of the decision and those who don't, won't.

## OUSFG Membership Rates

<b>TYPE</b>	<b>PRICE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Term	£2	Limited membership. A scant term as an OUSFG member.
Year	£4	Also limited membership. One thrilling year in OUSFG.
Life	£10	Membership that lasts as long as your natural life.
Eternal	£16	Membership beyond the grave. The undead can collect their newsletters in person, those resting in peace will have the newsletter placed on their grave or read to them by a medium.
Quantum	£20	Membership across the dimensions. Be a member of OUSFG in every known and unknown reality.
<i>And introducing, new for this term.....</i>		
Inanimate	£25	Sponsor an inanimate object as a member, or take it out yourself just in case. You never know when you might be transmuted into an inanimate object, don't lose your membership when it happens.

## LAZER QUEST OUSFG V RPGSOC

The President of PRGsoc has invited/challenged OUSFG to a meeting at Lazer Quest.

We need 9 team members for an OUSFG v RPGsoc battle at Lazer Quest in the second half of Michaelmas term.

Defend the honour of OUSFG (joint members - betray the honour of RPGsoc) by taking part in this titantic struggle.

Volunteers contact Matthew Marcus - Campaign Leader - at Magdalen.

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## **EX-MEMBERS!**

If anyone knows of an OUSFG member who has allowed their membership to lapse through negligence or inattention, please encourage them to claim their newsletter.

Also, life/eternal/quantum members who have left the university and therefore can't be sent things c/o the colleges, please send me your new address.

Attendance at meetings is not essential - but if you want a newsletter I can't send it unless I know the address.

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## **CONTEXT**

Yes, it's back!

By the request of Ralph Lovegrove, Context has been revived and is once again a valid section of the newsletter. Since it has been some time since it graced these pages and this ancient institution is unfamiliar to Freshers a brief explanation seems to be in order.

Context is a collection of things said by OUSFG members which, when taken out of context, seem to be more than usually random but, when taken in context, make perfect sense (allegedly). There now follows a selection of the immortal words of OUSFG as collected by Rhiannon over last term, which were deemed worthy by the society of preserving for posterity.

- "He'll be experiencing occasional life flashbacks for years afterwards." - Gideon
- "I only do it for the G-force." - Victoria
- "You've got to read her the one and smoke her the other." - Rhi
- "No, it's not with the flannel." - Peter
- "If they can't disguise themselves as a horse then they're not worth saving." - Gid
- "You won't get Tanaqui's grannies in doorways." - Rhi
- "Germans don't use their aggregate words in stress situations." -

Tanaqui

- "John the Baptist never said urkle." - Rhi

If anyone has a contribution for context, preferably something said by someone other than themselves, please send it to Rhiannon at Corpus.

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## Some (Very) Old Newsletters

Here are some newsletters from the ancient and revered days when [OUSFG](#) had cyberpresidents. 'Txiixt then and now, while an OUSFG president has been just the thing if you want to know exactly what is meant by a [metonym](#), they are unlikely to be good companions on the infobahn.

- [Early Michaelmas Term 1993](#)
- [Late Michaelmas Term 1993](#)
- [Early Hilary Term 1993](#)
- [Late Trinity Term 1993](#)
- [Late Hilary Term 1994](#)

Today, we can announce a great step forward: a literate [cybercommittee](#)! This is just what one would want from the forward-looking SF group that brought you [Sfinx](#) and the [Bloomsbury Good Reading Guide to Science Fiction and Fantasy](#). Mark my words: in a couple of years' time, everyone will be hopping on the cybermetonym bandwaggon.

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Created: 9th September 1996

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